PALO ALTO REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLANT
RECYCLED WATER SALINITY REDUCTION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Recycling treated wastewater is increasing in the arid West as a response to the fact that populations are increasing and fresh-water supplies are not. Palo Alto and partner communities are using treated wastewater for landscape irrigation, and that use is expected to grow dramatically in the future. Salts accumulate in water when it is used by people and industrial processes. To maximize the use of recycled water on the widest variety of landscaping, the salt content (salinity) needs to be minimized. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant (PARWQCP) is taking all practical steps to reduce salinity in recycled water.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of the PARWQCP to prevent unnecessary additions of salt to the sewer system, with a goal of lowering the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in the recycled water to less than 600 parts per million (ppm).

Application of this Policy

The City of Mountain View shall utilize this policy and its 600 ppm Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) goal to develop salinity control measures. Palo Alto owns and operates the Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP), which treats wastewater from Palo Alto and five other communities. The RWQCP partners, including Mountain View, will be asked to identify controllable salt inputs to wastewater from their communities and to implement control measures.

PROCEDURES

Staff estimates that the wastewater TDS can be reduced to 600 ppm without modifying normal human use or industrial activities. The major way in which salts can be reduced is by controlling the infiltration of saline groundwater which is currently entering sewer pipes through cracks and problem areas in those pipes as they cross saline areas near San Francisco Bay. Other sources of controllable salt must also be explored.

The activities that will be completed to implement this policy include:

1. Determine the salinity levels for each entity whose wastewater is treated by the RWQCP.

2. Identify the sources of salinity.

3. Develop alternatives for reducing the salinity levels.

4. Identify the actions that can be implemented to meet the TDS goals.

5. Prepare Salinity Reduction Plan.

6. Monitor TDS and report semiannually on progress toward meeting the TDS goal.